

[Personal Interview with Mrs. Nettie Locke]

Simpson, Mrs. [???

S—700—

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Person interview with Mrs. Nettie Locke.

Mr. William Locke and his wife "Nettie" Locke, now some 80 years of age, with their children, on March 19, 1879 started from "Cooke Burr Ranch" near Florence, Colorado, to locate in the San Juan Basin, near the junction of the San Juan and Animas Rivers, [?] County, New Mexico. They travelled in a four horse wagon and a "hask" drawn by two horses, and were just thirteen days on the road. They crossed Red Mountain and camped that night with a brother of Mr. Locke, who lived in that valley, and worked slowly over toward Alamosa. The night they made camp near that town they were so near a sheep camp that they took turns to keep guard all night to ward off Mexican sheep herders who were said to have made way with some campers not long before. They were known to be an ugly lot, hence their caution. Traveling on to their new location, they finally came into Largo Canyon, quite near their goal. They made their last camp in this Spanish-American settlement and found these people most friendly. In seeking fresh eggs and milk from them, the fact that Mr. Locke spoke Spanish freely seemed to give them an open Sesame to their homes and Mrs. Locke well remembers Mrs. Locke well remembers the friendliness extended to them in giving them the shelters [?] their homes for the night, saying it was too cold for the baby to sleep outside. Also [?] gave good care to their tired horses, and started/ them off on the last leg of their journey well supplied with some of the beef they had just been butchering. This was in sharp contrast to the type of Spanish - Mexicans encountered near Alamosa. 'twas but a short distance from Largo to the

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junction of the San Juan and Las Aminus rivers, and in a few days Mr. and Mrs. Locke were established in a three room house of "pole" construction, where the Farmington Fair Grounds are now located. This was an improvement on camping, to be sure, but Mrs. Locke was sorely dissapointed "that the rooms had no floors. I couldn't put the baby down down in the dirt." Mr. Locke found her in tears about it, so to console her he hastily covered one floor with hay and put a Navajo rug on the hay where the baby sat and played in cleanliness

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This room had a fireplace in it for heating, the kitchen was heated by a cook-stove which they had brought with them and of which they were justly proud. The third room had no heat. Before long They were able to floor one room, where the fire place was, for the baby to play in and soon after the floor of the kitchen was partially floored, that is the part that held the cookstove. This was not a very desirable location as it was too low and damp, especially in rainy weather, when it was almost a swamp, so, for this reason and because of an Indian scare they moved nearer to the town which was higher ground. Mrs. Locke exhibited a 12x12 photograph of what the town was in the very early days which was quite interesting. In the foreground to the right, was the much talked of 18x24 school-house, then a one room structure, which is to-day a twostory, nine roomed house, bearing no resemblance to the school-house. To the left was a big open space, then a tent next to a small adobe building now gone altogether, but was the [?] location of the Bowman drug store where there was a hold-up some time later and on the north side of "Main Street" could plainly be seen the long narrow roof of the first business block, "The Markley Building", beyond the two small stores just east of it, all still standing. In the center background was the home of Mr. Oliver Mc Gordon, the man who named Farmington. This was the adobe house now owned and occupied by Mrs. Lorena Mahany, and the home of the Farmington Library.

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Mr. Mc Gordon was a man of uncertain temper, and one day, when in a rage, he shot and killed his wife and was hung for it.

In the farthest north-west corner of the photograph could be seen the tall trees on the Markley Estate, nearly a mile away, now the home of R.T.F. Simpson.

In the center or near foreground were a few people a-foot and on horse-back, and an open ditch with ice in it. There was nothing else in the picture [?] except the wide open spaces, of very rough ground, some water or mud in the street [?] edge with ice with considerable space given to a clear sky.

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Mr. Locke set out his first fruit trees on June 2nd, 1880. This was the [?] of what later became the largest orchard in the San Juan County.

Mr. Locke's first alfalfa seed was a gift from the friendly Spanish - Americans in Largo canyon. It was a tobacco sack full of seed and from this small quantity he, in later years [?], he raised large quantities of Alfalfa.

From Four bee-hives from Cannon City, Colorado, was started the bee-culture in the county, which soon became the property of Mrs. Locke. She learned to handle them and was never stung, and from these four hives she supplied many people of the valley with bees. And this she told with considerable pride. The orchards, alfalfa fields and the cleome or wild bee weed furnished plenty of pasture for the bees.

Mrs. Locke's chickens were such good layers there was considerable income from the eggs; especially in the winter when they were somewhat scarce, and one winter they brought her in a dollar a dozen, her one regret being they went to the "White House Saloon". However, saloon or no saloon she could not resist that price.

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Mrs. Locke is the mother of 14 children, a little woman with pure white hair, soft voice, pleasing manner and clear memory, but so frail with the burden of her 80 or more years her strenght gave out in less than an hour, therefore here ends the history she gave me of her first years in Farmington. Source [?] of information

Mrs. Nettie Locke, Waterflow, New Mexico.